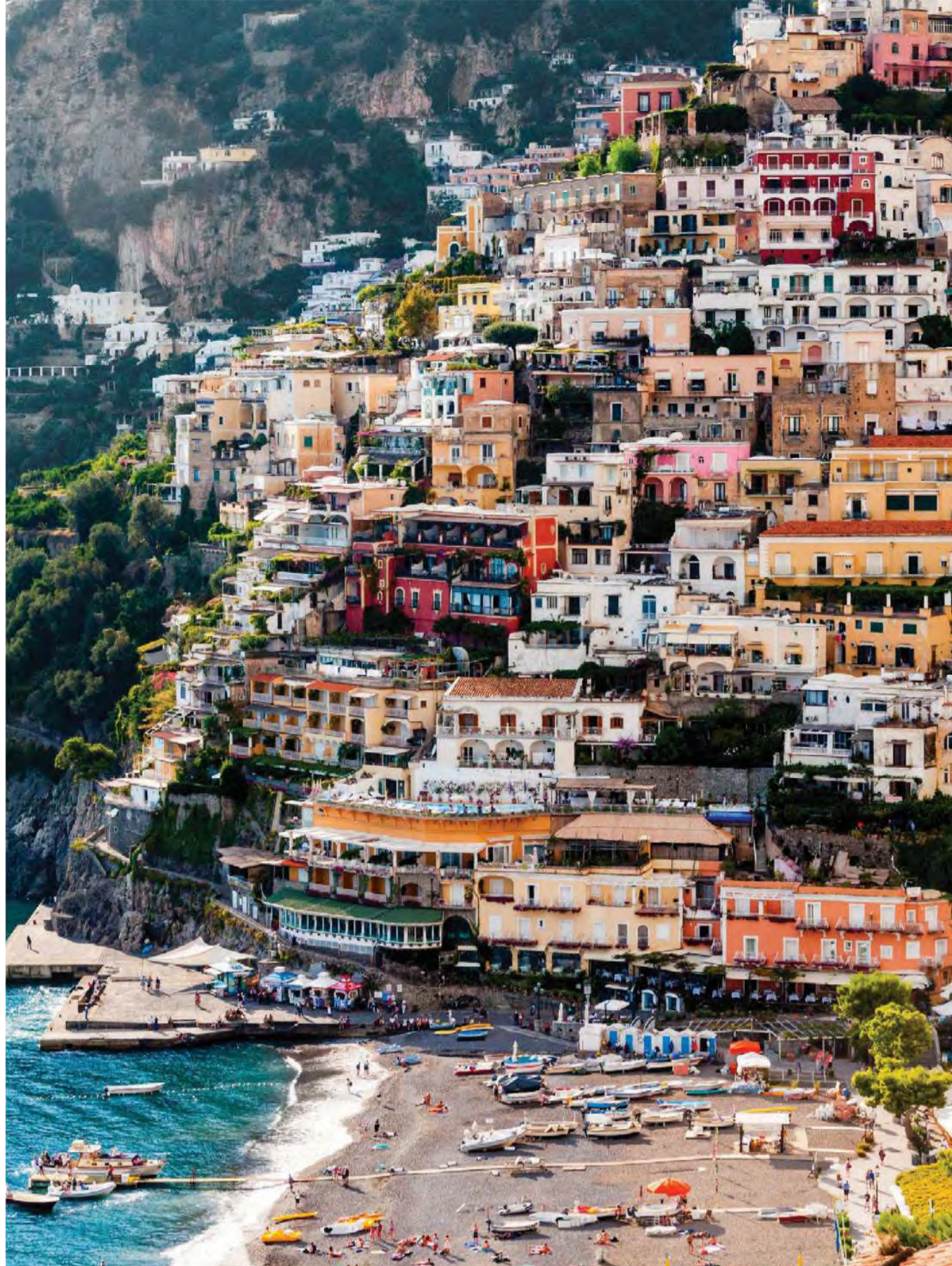


TRAVEL+ LEISURE

2022

World's
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Awards





◀ The town of Positano, on Italy's Amalfi Coast.

▲ A fishing boat ferries diners to Da Adolfo, a restaurant near Positano.

Once Upon a Time in Italy

A family vacation may not be the first thing that springs to mind when picturing the ruins of Pompeii, the romance of Sorrento, or the glamour of the Amalfi Coast. But for **Flora Stubbs**, bringing the kids along made the trip 10 times more fun.

T ALL BEGAN, as things often do when you're a child, with a story. Last spring, a book called *Pompeii...Buried Alive!* became the subject of intense fascination for my daughter, Stella, and her little brother, Leo. One minute the Amazon delivery guy was at the door; the next, all the two of them could talk about was the demise of this southern Italian town—the cataclysmic 79 A.D. eruption of Mount Vesuvius, the 10-mile mushroom cloud, the population of 16,000 mummified under 16 feet of ash.

Taken on its own, this apocalyptic history would not have convinced my husband, David, and me to book a trip to Italy—far from it, in fact. But then it dawned on us. We could take the kids to get their morbid kicks in Pompeii, then spend the rest of our vacation enjoying the more life-affirming



attractions of Sorrento and Amalfi, both just an hour or so away by car.

And so it was, one golden afternoon last June, that we found ourselves on the remarkably clean and efficient TrenItalia service from Rome to Naples. About half an hour before we pulled into Napoli Centrale, we saw Vesuvius, or “Azuvius,” as Leo still calls it—a sleeping giant rising some 4,200 feet behind the city's suburbs. The kids pressed their faces against the window as we sped past rows of orange houses with green shutters, umbrella pines, and grapevines. But the volcano, as if in another dimension, didn't seem to move at all.

▲ The author's daughter on a scavenger hunt in the ancient city of Pompeii.



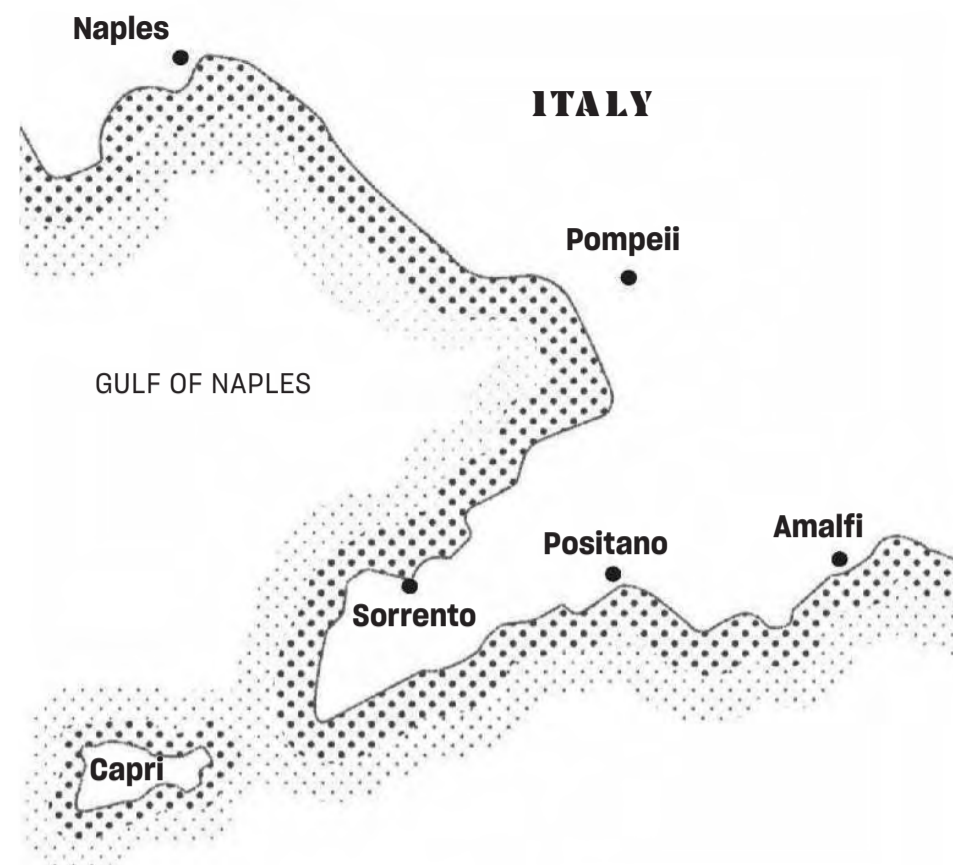
From Naples, we took a taxi an hour or so south along the ravishing Sorrentine coast, winding our way past stalls selling lemon granita and doorways heavy with hot-pink bougainvillea. Our base for the next four nights was the **Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria** (*lhw.com*; doubles from \$795), a property we had chosen with great care. Friends had made faces when we said we were considering a family trip to this romantic, upscale part of the world. (“I mean, I went there on my honeymoon,” one said with an apologetic shrug.) Many hotels in Amalfi, Ravello, and Positano don’t accept children at all; those that do tend to be tight on space and high on style, with plenty of vertiginous cliff drops to ensure parental stress is kept at a maximum.

But the minute we drove through the wrought-iron gates of the Excelsior Vittoria, which open off Sorrento’s main square like those of some fairy-tale castle, I could tell we were in safe hands. This 1834 property, which towers over the cliffs and the marina (an Art Deco-era elevator ferries guests from the lobby right down to the water), is surrounded by a large garden shaded by lemon trees, and has the assured, center-of-gravity feel of a hotel that knows it’s doing something right.

“We have a lot of space, so there is soccer and a playground and a large swimming pool,” explained fifth-generation owner and CEO Guido Fiorentino over a Spritz made with *limoncello*. A member of Leading Hotels of the World, the Excelsior Vittoria is filled with elegant touches, from the monogrammed linen hand towels in the marble bathrooms to the parlor palms in the piano bar. Yet when the kids

▲ The author’s family passing through the Arch of Tiberius, in Pompeii.

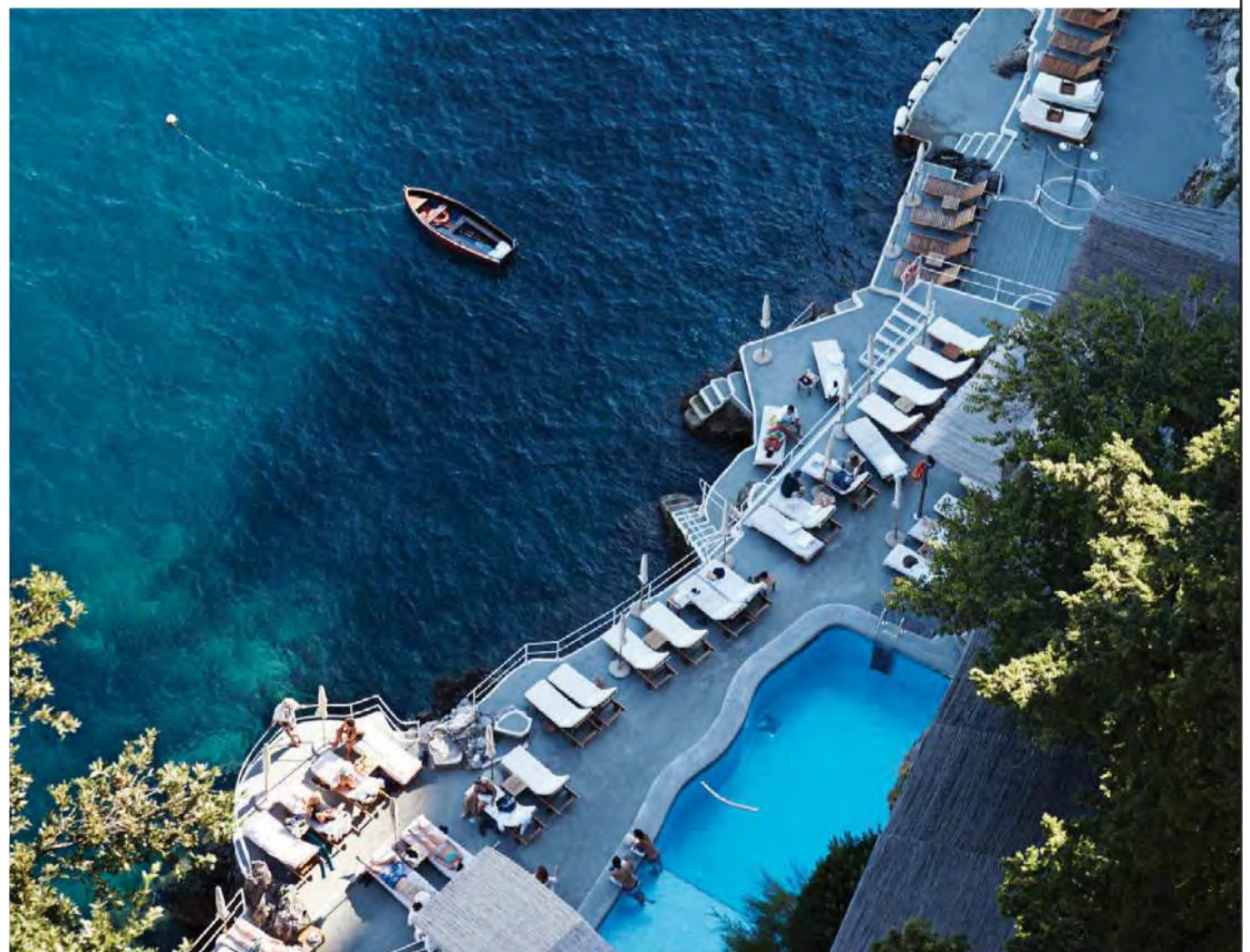
▼ The pool at Amalfi’s Hotel Santa Caterina, as seen from its terrace restaurant.



spread Nutella on the tablecloth with a butter knife at breakfast, or decided to make lemonade from fruit they found in the garden, it somehow never felt like a big deal.

The following day was the main event: our visit to Pompeii. Though it was still early summer, by the time we met our guide, Patrizia Coco, at the entrance to the UNESCO World Heritage site around mid-morning, the sun was beating down on the almost entirely shade-free, 40-acre site. “Today is very hot!” Coco proclaimed, fanning herself with a clipboard.

A veteran guide for Italian-run tour operator Discover Your Italy, Coco swiftly directed us along the streets of the ancient city to the first of a series of drinking fountains, each of which has a different animal carved into its stone pedestal. Back in the first century A.D., she explained, these served as meeting places; today, they were welcome spots for the kids to splash around and cool down in. Coco, herself a mother of two, gave Stella a scavenger-hunt-style quiz, and looked on patiently as Leo examined every piece of volcanic rock we passed (there were many), teaching him the difference between basalt and tufa.



FROM TOP: COURTESY OF FLORA STUBBS; SIMON WATSON. ILLUSTRATION BY DONOUGH O'MALLEY

▶ The author's son at Da Adolfo.

We came to the place where plaster casts of Pompeians who perished under the ashes were on display. There were adult forms and, almost hidden from view in the depths of the shaded enclosure, the shape of a child. Each was frozen in a position of abject terror. I remembered a passage from the book that began it all: “The people in the streets covered their faces with their hands and clothes. But the ashes piled up higher and higher. The people could not move. The people could not breathe.”

It was then that the tragedy of what took place here really hit us; that the destruction of Pompeii ceased to be just a story, and became something that happened to real people, with real lives. “Buried alive,” said Stella, as we turned to leave.

POMPEII BEHIND US, it was time to get into serious relaxation mode. The following morning we took a ferry to Amalfi, an hour or so down the coast. If Sorrento had felt chic and visually iconic, Amalfi took all of that to the next level. Even with two kids in tow, zipping past peach-toned villas stacked high on the cliffs above the turquoise Tyrrhenian Sea felt like one of the most stylish moments of our lives.

We were headed to another essential address for anyone visiting this region with children: the **Hotel Santa Caterina** (lhw.com; doubles from \$1,256). Also a part of Leading Hotels of the World, this place has been family-run for four generations, and has an aesthetic I couldn't get enough of: Amalfi tile everywhere, Jacuzzis in the bathrooms, a gracious staff clad in white dinner jackets and bow ties. It also has one of those swimming pools cut right into the cliffs, where David and I could luxuriate on sun beds

▼ Guest rooms at Sorrento's Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria overlook the Bay of Naples.



and watch the ocean twinkle away at our toes while Stella and Leo splashed safely behind us.

The next day was my husband's birthday: time to put the Santa Caterina concierge to the test. First, they booked David a game of tennis on a court in nearby Positano, images of which set new records for engagement on his Instagram page. At lunchtime, we all met on the beach in Positano and hopped into a little boat with a red, fish-shaped sign—the only way to reach **Da Adolfo** (daadolfo.com; entrées \$11–\$25), a restaurant on a shingle beach a couple of miles outside of town. There, we ate a *spaghetti alle vongole* for the ages, and a sea bream cooked in parsley, garlic, and olive oil—simple yet sublime. There was ice cream, and coffee, followed by a dip in the luminous sea, where we bobbed up and down in a row as the glistening bodies on the beach sent wafts of cigarette smoke and suntan lotion out over the water.

That evening, as David and I were about to leave the kids with a babysitter and head out for a birthday dinner at Positano's fabulous—and most definitely child-free—**Le Sirenuse** (sirenuse.com; doubles from \$2,968), Barbara La Rosa from Discover Your Italy called to check in. “Amalfi, to me, is a kind of paradise,” she said with a laugh as we exchanged goodbyes. And she was right.

When you're traveling with kids, there's always a little bit of pain mixed in with the pleasure, a bit of hell to accompany the heaven. Had Stella and Leo behaved impeccably? Do they ever? Were there moments in glamorous, slightly cramped public spaces where I thought someone was going to get hurt, or some priceless piece of hotel décor was about to get broken? Absolutely. Would I have changed it for the world? Of course not. 🌐

Plan a trip to Sorrento, Pompeii, and Amalfi with Discover Your Italy (discoveryouritaly.com; six-night trips from \$3,150 per person).



EUROPE HOTELS

Readers couldn't wait to return to the Continent, where both flashy newcomers and more storied properties emerged victorious. Paris claimed the most spots on the region-wide city list, while Italy edged out Greece for the most resorts.

TOP 10 EUROPE CITY HOTELS

- Hôtel Madame Réve**
Paris 98.73
With its location in a 19th-century post office and a sublime rooftop bar, this newcomer honors the city's past—while embodying its modern style.
- Rosewood Villa Magna**
Madrid 98.67
- Portrait Firenze**
Italy 98.25
- Raffles Istanbul**
98.25
- Shangri-La the Shard, London**
97.86
- La Réserve Paris – Hôtel & Spa**
97.26
- Hotel de la Ville, a Rocco Forte Hotel**
Rome 97.17
- The Goring**
London 96.55
- Hotel Savoy, a Rocco Forte Hotel**
Florence 96.47
- Le Bristol Paris, Oetker Collection**
96.00

TOP 10 EUROPE RESORT HOTELS

- Rosewood Castiglion del Bosco**
Montalcino, Italy 99.25
This 5,000-acre estate embraces Tuscan tradition, from the restored villas to truffle-hunting excursions.

- Grace Hotel, Auberge Resorts Collection**
Santorini, Greece 99.22
- Sani Asterias**
Halkidiki, Greece 97.87
- Coquillade Provence Resort & Spa**
Gargas, France 97.82
- Royal Champagne Hôtel & Spa**
Champillon, France 97.50
- Canaves Oia Epitome**
Santorini, Greece 97.41
- Hotel Santa Caterina**
Amalfi, Italy 97.33
- Il San Pietro di Positano**
Positano, Italy 97.12
- Finca Cortesin Hotel, Golf & Spa**
Málaga, Spain 96.97
- Grand Hotel Tremezzo**
Lake Como, Italy 96.80

TOP 5 U.K. AND IRELAND RESORT HOTELS

- Ashford Castle**
County Mayo, Ireland 95.51
With its falconry school and richly decorated, antique-filled rooms, this 83-room estate exudes a sense of history. It now also produces its own slow-distilled gin.
- Ballyfin**
County Laois, Ireland 95.50
- Gleneagles**
Auchterarder, Scotland 95.09
- Adare Manor**
County Limerick, Ireland 93.97
- Dromoland Castle**
County Clare, Ireland 93.70

TOP 10 LONDON HOTELS

- Shangri-La the Shard, London**
97.86
Many guest rooms in this stunner, which occupies 18 floors of a Renzo Piano-designed tower, provide panoramic views of the city.
- The Goring**
96.55
- The Connaught**
95.79
- The Lanesborough, Oetker Collection**
95.50
- Kimpton Fitzroy London**
95.24
- Claridge's**
94.60
- The Savoy**
93.63
- Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park, London**
92.95
- Four Seasons Hotel London at Park Lane**
92.50
- Rosewood London**
92.39

NO. 1 RESORT HOTEL IN THE U.K. AND IRELAND

The Presidential Suite at Ireland's Ashford Castle.



TOP 5 DUBLIN HOTELS

- The Merrion Hotel**
94.34
Occupying four restored Georgian town houses, this classic property near Trinity College is known for lavish afternoon teas.
- The Westbury**
91.25



NO. 1 RESORT HOTEL IN FRANCE

Coquillade Provence Resort & Spa sits on a 100-acre family-owned estate.

- The Shelbourne, Autograph Collection**
89.85
- Conrad Dublin**
89.25
- InterContinental Dublin**
85.75

TOP 10 PARIS HOTELS

- Hôtel Madame Réve**
98.73
Sophisticated cool is the vibe at this design-forward hotel. Its 82 rooms incorporate onyx desks and tan leather seating, while the lush rooftop garden is the city's latest "it" spot for a drink.
- La Réserve Paris – Hôtel & Spa**
97.26
- Le Bristol Paris, Oetker Collection**
96.00
- Hôtel de Crillon, a Rosewood Hotel**
95.66
- Cheval Blanc Paris**
94.67
- Four Seasons Hotel George V, Paris**
93.35
- Ritz Paris**
93.19
- Mandarin Oriental, Paris**
92.63

NO. 1 HOTEL IN PARIS

Bartenders at Hôtel Madame Réve serve cocktails in a bright room with 26-foot-high ceilings.

- Shangri-La Paris**
92.59
- Relais Christine**
92.25

TOP 5 FRANCE RESORT HOTELS

- Coquillade Provence Resort & Spa**
Gargas 97.82
Located in the Luberon region, this elegant Provençal resort sits on a 100-acre wine and olive estate. Day trips to the surrounding lavender fields are a must.
- Royal Champagne Hôtel & Spa**
Champillon 97.50
- Hôtel du Cap-Eden-Roc, Oetker Collection**
Cap d'Antibes 94.67
- Grand-Hôtel du Cap-Ferrat, a Four Seasons Hotel**
St.-Jean-Cap-Ferrat 94.34
- Waldorf Astoria Versailles – Trianon Palace**
93.87

TOP 5 FLORENCE HOTELS

- Portrait Firenze**
98.25
Part of the Ferragamo family's Lungarno Collection, the Portrait's 37 rooms and suites are a study in understated elegance—allowing the views of the Arno River to take center stage.
- Hotel Savoy, a Rocco Forte Hotel**
96.47

- Helvetia & Bristol Firenze**
95.60
- Hotel Lungarno**
93.89
- Four Seasons Hotel Firenze**
92.71

TOP 5 VENICE HOTELS

- Cipriani, a Belmond Hotel**
95.11
With an Olympic-size heated saltwater pool and cross-lagoon views of San Marco and the Doge's Palace, this 96-room icon embodies Venetian opulence.
- The Gritti Palace, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Venice**
93.23
- Bauer Il Palazzo**
91.88
- Hotel Danieli, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Venice**
91.00
- Aman Venice**
90.35

TOP 5 ROME HOTELS

- Hotel de la Ville, a Rocco Forte Hotel**
97.17
An elegant respite in the heart of the Eternal City, this stylish property occupies an 18th-century palazzo.
- Hotel de Russie, a Rocco Forte Hotel**
93.08
- St. Regis Rome**
92.92
- Hotel Eden**
92.70
- J.K. Place Roma**
92.57



FROM TOP: JEROME GALLAN/COURTESY OF HÔTEL MADAME RÉVE; COURTESY OF COQUILLADE PROVENCE RESORT & SPA; COURTESY OF ASHFORD CASTLE



4
**NO. 1
 RESORT HOTEL
 IN SPAIN AND
 PORTUGAL**

Finca Cortesín's Blue Bar connects with a terrace that overlooks the property's gardens.

- 8. **Blue Palace Elounda, a Luxury Collection Resort, Crete**
93.45
- 9. **Andronis Luxury Suites**
Santorini 92.52
- 10. **Cavo Tagoo**
Mykonos 89.18

TOP 3
**BARCELONA
 HOTELS**

- 1. **Mandarin Oriental, Barcelona**
94.19
This 120-room hotel's first-rate location on the tony Passeig de Gràcia and its Michelin two-starred restaurant overseen by chef Carme Ruscalleda proved to be a winning combination.
- 2. **Hotel Arts**
91.03
- 3. **Cotton House Hotel, Autograph Collection**
89.33

TOP 10
**ITALY
 RESORT HOTELS**

- 1. **Rosewood Castiglion del Bosco**
Montalcino 99.25
Guests use this Tuscan estate as their base to explore the medieval towns of Val d'Orcia.
- 2. **Hotel Santa Caterina**
Amalfi 97.33
- 3. **Il San Pietro di Positano**
Positano 97.12
- 4. **Grand Hotel Tremezzo**
Lake Como 96.80
- 5. **Borgo Egnazia**
Savelletri di Fasano 96.60

- 6. **Grand Hotel Villa Serbelloni**
Bellagio 96.00
- 6. **Hotel Caesar Augustus**
Capri 96.00
- 8. **Le Sirenuse**
Positano 95.81
- 9. **Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria**
Sorrento 95.56
- 10. **Villa d'Este**
Lake Como 95.37

TOP 3
**ATHENS
 HOTELS**

- 1. **Hotel Grande Bretagne, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Athens**
93.72

The Acropolis views are unbeatable, but what really sets this hotel apart is the personal butler service offered to guests who book one of its 61 suites.

- 2. **Four Seasons Astir Palace Hotel Athens**
93.14
- 3. **King George, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Athens**
91.50

TOP 10
**GREECE
 RESORT HOTELS**

- 1. **Grace Hotel, Auberge Resorts Collection**
Santorini 99.22

Tucked into the cliffs of Santorini, this modern 20-room sanctuary has a buzzy cocktail bar, recently opened in partnership with Athens hot spot Baba Au Rum.

- 2. **Sani Asterias**
Halkidiki 97.87
- 3. **Canaves Oia Epitome**
Santorini 97.41
- 4. **Katikies Santorini**
96.24
- 5. **Katikies Mykonos**
95.29
- 6. **Canaves Oia**
Santorini 94.39
- 7. **Andronis Boutique Hotel**
Santorini 93.62

TOP 3
**MADRID
 HOTELS**

- 1. **Rosewood Villa Magna**
98.67
The concierge at this 154-room newcomer in the upscale Salamanca district can arrange intimate viewings of key collections at the Prado and other museums.
- 2. **Hotel Ritz, Madrid**
94.13
- 3. **Four Seasons Hotel Madrid**
90.90



NO. 1 HOTEL IN AMSTERDAM

Shelves in the Book Collector's Suite at the Pulitzer Amsterdam are lined with novels and tabletop tomes.

- 3. **Andaz Vienna Am Belvedere**
91.00
- 4. **Hotel Imperial, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Vienna**
90.25
- 5. **Park Hyatt Vienna**
89.60

TOP 5 **ISTANBUL** HOTELS

- 1. **Raffles Istanbul**
98.25
- Tucked inside a modern high-rise, this 185-room hotel entices guests with Turkish baths in the spa and expertly made craft cocktails at the Long Bar.

- 2. **Shangri-La Bosphorus, Istanbul**
95.90
- 3. **Çırağan Palace Kempinski Istanbul**
92.87
- 4. **Four Seasons Hotel Istanbul at the Bosphorus**
92.86
- 5. **Four Seasons Hotel Istanbul at Sultanahmet**
90.59

TOP 3 **COPENHAGEN** HOTELS

- 1. **Coco Hotel**
92.80
- Run entirely on a solar-powered grid, this 88-room property invites travelers to mingle in common spaces that feel as welcoming and comfortable as a family living room.

- 2. **Hotel d'Angleterre**
92.31
- 3. **Hotel Sanders**
88.00

TOP 3 **ICELAND** RESORT HOTELS

- 1. **Hotel Rangá Hella** 92.47
- Fine Icelandic dining, helicopter tours, and expeditions to see the northern lights are just a few of the offerings at this cozy 52-room lodge.
- 2. **The Retreat at Blue Lagoon Iceland** Grindavík 90.93
 - 3. **Fosshotel Glacier Lagoon** Óræfi 89.74

TOP 3 **SPAIN AND PORTUGAL** RESORT HOTELS

- 1. **Finca Cortesín Hotel, Golf & Spa** Málaga, Spain 96.97
- While the property's 18-hole championship course is a major draw, activities at this Costa del Sol resort range from horseback riding to kitesurfing.
- 2. **Marbella Club** Marbella, Spain 95.25
 - 3. **Six Senses Douro Valley** Lamego, Portugal 94.97

TOP 3 **BERLIN** HOTELS

- 1. **Hotel Adlon Kempinski Berlin** 92.31
- Built after the fall of the Berlin Wall on the site of the iconic hotel of the same name, the Adlon offers all the opulence of the original and has a superb central location.

- 2. **Grand Hyatt Berlin** 87.56
- 3. **25Hours Hotel Bikini Berlin** 84.25

TOP 5 **AMSTERDAM** HOTELS

- 1. **Pulitzer Amsterdam** 93.04
- Readers loved the cozy rooms spread out across this group of 25 restored canal houses. Two boats are on hand to ferry travelers through the Dutch capital.
- 2. **Conservatorium Hotel** 91.53
 - 3. **Waldorf Astoria Amsterdam** 91.47
 - 4. **Ambassade Hotel** 90.34
 - 5. **De L'Europe Amsterdam** 89.44

TOP 5 **VIENNA** HOTELS

- 1. **Hotel Bristol, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Vienna** 93.45
- This 19th-century icon is located across from the Vienna State Opera and hosts events that highlight the city's rich musical legacy.
- 2. **Hotel Sacher Wien** 92.36

NO. 1 RESORT HOTEL IN ICELAND

The aurora borealis over Hotel Rangá, located on the Golden Circle route.



FROM TOP: COURTESY OF PULITZER AMSTERDAM; HREINN MAGNÚSSIN/COURTESY OF HOTEL RANGÁ